



**EQUALITY
ILLINOIS**

PRESS RELEASE

Founded in 1991, Equality Illinois is the state's oldest, largest and most effective organization advocating for the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Illinoisans.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EQUALITY ILLINOIS APPLAUDS CHAMPAIGN COUNTY FOR DECISION TO ISSUE MARRIAGE LICENSES

State's largest LGBT organization urges other counties to follow lead without delay

CHICAGO – Equality Illinois applauded Champaign County Clerk Gordy Hulten today for being the second county in the state to issue marriage licenses to all loving, committed couples and challenged other clerks to do the same.

Hulten made the decision in the wake of the ruling by U.S. District Court last week in Chicago that marriage equality is a fundamental right and denying immediate access to it is unconstitutional.

Equality Illinois, the state's oldest and largest advocacy organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Illinoisans, then immediately called on the other 101 county clerks to accept the federal court's ruling and also begin issuing licenses.

"Clerk Hulten recognized both the humanity of helping gay and lesbian couples to fulfill their dreams and the legal soundness of following the decision of a federal court that denying marriage licenses was unconstitutional," said Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois.

"It is simply time for the other county clerks to follow suit," Cherkasov added. "As we saw in the immediate rush to the Cook County Clerk's marriage bureau after Friday's ruling, gay and lesbian couples are eager and ready to take the step that not only grants them and their family the legal benefits and rights of marriage but also bestows society's recognition that their love is equal."

It is also significant that the licenses are now available in a Central Illinois county, which is within easy driving distance of not only Champaign-Urbana but also Peoria, Decatur, Springfield, Bloomington-Normal and Danville for couples and their families. "While we were thrilled with Friday's ruling that applied to Cook County, this is a major step that instantly spreads marriage equality to another major region of the state," Cherkasov said. "We are working with more county clerks to help them step up."

The Champaign County Clerk's office is at 1776 E. Washington Street, Urbana, Illinois. The website is <http://champaigncountyclerk.com/vitals/marriage.php>.

With the swiftness of the ruling and its immediate effectiveness, there are many questions

about implementation of the law. The Equality Illinois guide Marriage Rights in Illinois helps answer them. It can be read and downloaded here:

http://www.equalityillinois.us/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Marriage_Rights-5.pdf.

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